In 2021, Oregon’s Environmental Quality Commission adopted the federal Generator Improvement Rules, or GIR. The GIR impacts all generators of hazardous waste. This rule includes over 60 changes to the hazardous waste generator regulations that clarify existing requirements, increase flexibility, and improve environmental protection. These changes also reorganize the regulations to make them easier to follow and make certain technical corrections. This fact sheet focuses on changes to the marking and labeling of containers.

Who is affected?
All large and small quantity generators of hazardous waste and transfer, storage and disposal facilities are subject to container marking and labeling requirements.

What changed?
- In addition to the words "hazardous waste," containers and tanks labels must indicate the hazards of the contents of the units while in storage.
- Satellite accumulation containers must be labeled "hazardous waste," the same as storage containers. The option to label satellite containers with "other words that identify the contents of the container" is no longer allowed.
- For containment buildings, the generator must have a sign in an obvious and visible place with the words “hazardous waste” and the hazards of the waste indicated on the sign.
- Generators must add the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, or RCRA, waste codes before shipping waste offsite.
  - Generators must mark their containers with the applicable RCRA waste codes or use a barcoding system that performs the same function.

Key Benefits

Choose a labeling method – Offers flexibility in complying with marking and labeling regulations by allowing several established methods.

Increases protection - Improves risk communication for workers, waste handlers, emergency responders and visitors.
Clarifications

- Labeling must occur at the initial point of generation.
- For containers with smaller containers inside, such as tubes and vials, generators have the option of marking the outer, or secondary, container or attaching a tag with the required information instead of marking each individual small container.
- For wastes in a container that already has appropriate marking and labeling, e.g., a commercial chemical product in its original container with an intact label, the existing marking and labeling are sufficient, provided indication of the hazards of the chemical are present.
  - In this case, the generator could add the words “hazardous waste” to the existing label or on a new label placed obviously and visibly on the container but not covering required label information.

Why the change?

- Improving labeling better communicates the risks of what a container holds to workers, waste handlers, emergency responders and visitors.
- Adding the RCRA waste codes before shipping waste offsite allows receiving treatment, storage and disposal facilities, or TSDFs, to know how to treat the wastes to meet land disposal restriction requirements.
- Offers flexibility in how to comply with regulations by allowing any of several established methods of labeling waste hazards, such as: words indicating the applicable U.S. Environmental Protection Agency hazardous waste characteristic(s): ignitable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic; HazMat labels or placards used by the U.S. Department of Transportation; hazard statement or pictogram used by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration; chemical hazard label as used by the National Fire Protection Association.

Where to find more information?
Complete regulations are at 40 CFR 262.15(a)(5) satellite accumulation area regulations for small and large quantity generators and 40 CFR 262.16(b)(6) conditions for exemption for a small quantity generator that accumulates hazardous waste. Oregon adopted this rule by reference at Oregon Administrative Rules 340-100-0002.

Have questions?
DEQ has made it easy for you to get your questions answered. To learn more and request free, non-regulatory technical assistance, please visit www.oregon.gov/deq/Hazards-and-Cleanup

Alternate formats
DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.oregon.gov.